

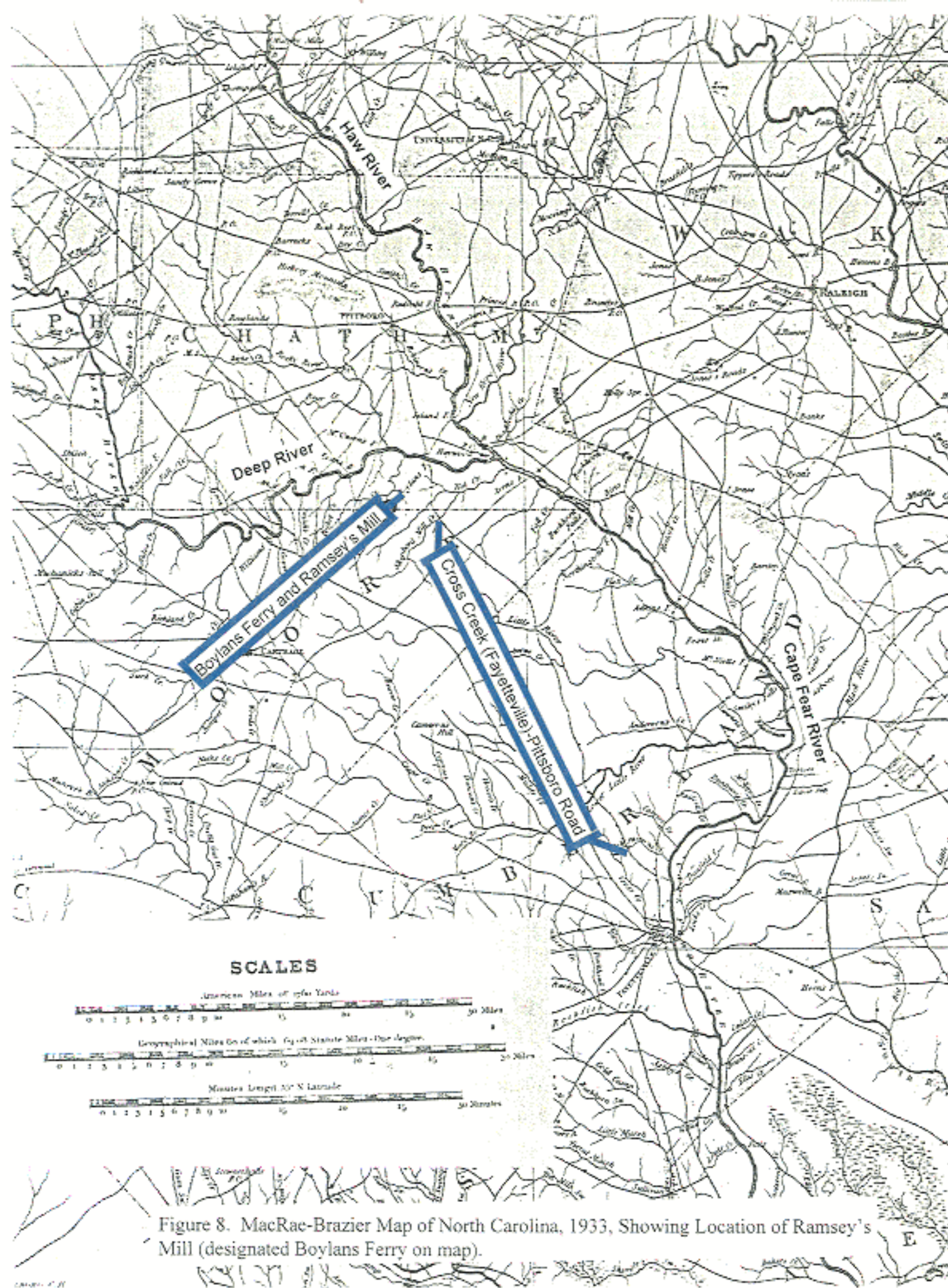
IV. PREVIOUS HISTORICAL RECOGNITION & DOCUMENTATION OF RAMSEY'S MILL & THE LOCKVILLE LOCK & DAM COMPLEX

Ramsey's Mill and Tavern and the Lockville Lock, Canal and Dam, have long been recognized by the local populace as prominent historic features along the Deep River.

Ramsey's Mill and Ramsey's Tavern were constructed in the mid to late eighteenth century. Located along a major road between Cross Creek and Pittsboro (Figure 8), part of an interregional road system connecting the central Piedmont and Coastal Plain regions, the mill and tavern were prominent travel destinations during the late eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries (Greensboro Daily News 1938). The sites are identified as places British Revolutionary War troops bivouacked during Cornwallis' trek to the North Carolina coast after the Battle of Guilford Courthouse (Guilford County). General Greene's troops also stayed in the Ramsey's Mill area after pursuing Cornwallis to the Deep River (Pancake 1985). This association with the American Revolution has given the mill and tavern a special place in local lore and history. The sites are mentioned in several local histories (Hadley et al. 1976; London 1876; Osborn 1986) and historical resource inventories (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill 1991). Ramsey's Mill and Lockville also are designated by North Carolina State Highway Historical Markers along US Highway 1 and Old U.S. Highway 1 (Hill 1990).

The Lockville Lock, Dam and Powerhouse property is an industrial and transportation feature which occupies a prominent position on the local landscape (Figures 3, 4 and 9). The canal and lock system operated from about 1856 through the remainder of the nineteenth century. The lock and canal were converted into a water-powered electrical generating power plant in about 1899, and the dam, canal (modified into a power plant turbine race) and power plant have remained prominent features on the landscape throughout the present century.

Both the Lock and Dam and Ramsey's Mill, received considerable attention in the late 1950s and 1960s when plans were being made to relocate old U.S. Highway 1 to its present location. The highway alignment crossed the Lockville canal, passed through the site of a mill (Barringer's Roller Mill) and beside the ruins of Ramsey's Mill. The road cut for this alignment, located north of the river, also encompassed the site of Ramsey's Tavern, obliterating any traces of it. Concern by local historians about the impending destruction to the Ramsey's Mill/Lockville site led to an effort to salvage materials from the mill site before it was destroyed. Under the direction of Mr. Paul Barringer and W.E. Horner, both residents of Sanford, a backhoe was brought into the Ramsey's Mill site to uncover items. As mentioned in newspaper articles, the salvage effort led to the recovery of six mill stones and other iron items (Mudge 1957; The Chatham Record 1963) (Figure 10). Some, if not all, of the mill stones were taken to the offices of the North Carolina Archives and History in Raleigh. Also included in the newspaper articles were photographs of Ramsey's and Barringer's Mills at Lockville, the Barringer House, and the Electric Power Plant.



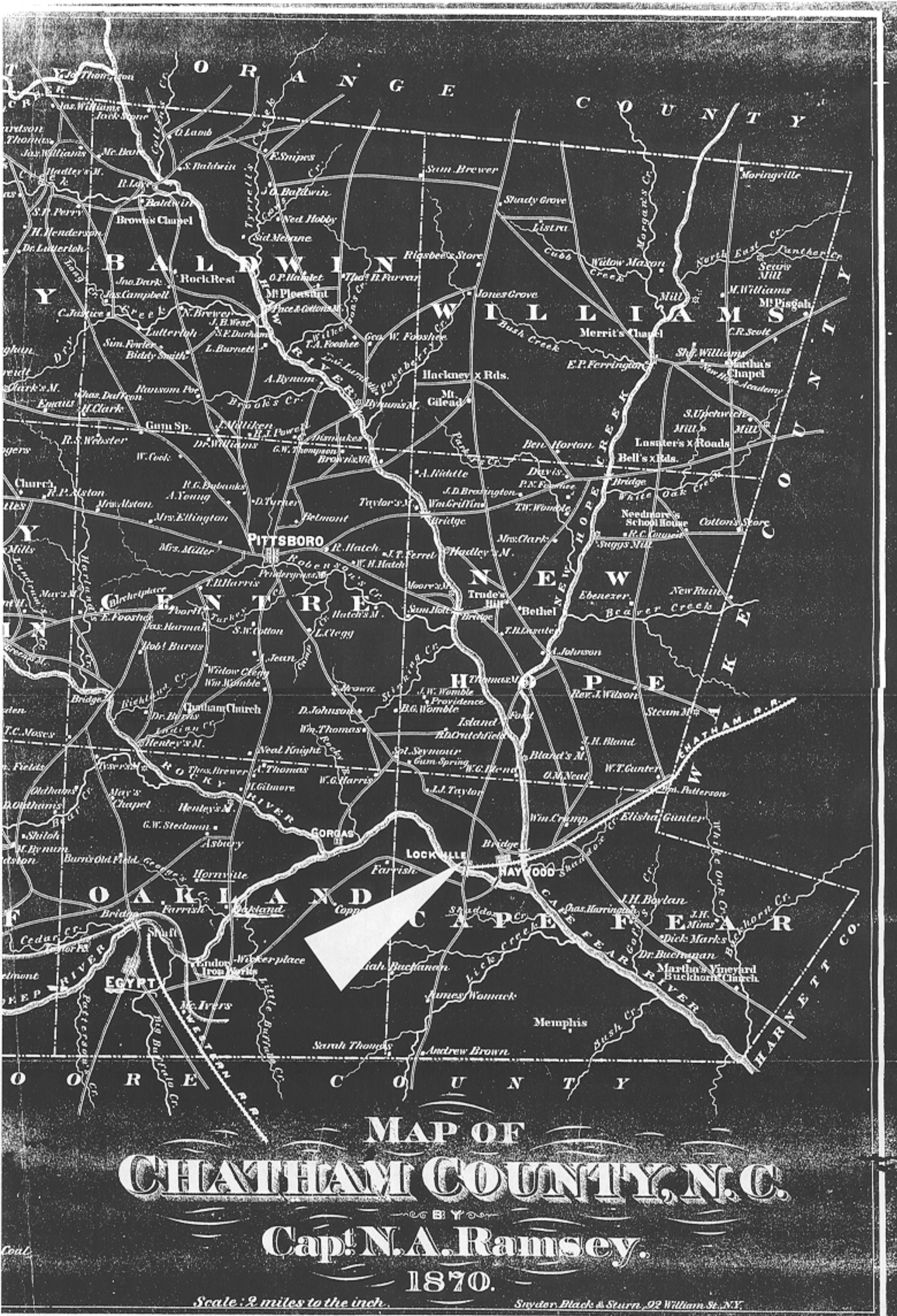


Figure 9. Map of Chatham County, N.C., by Capt. N.A. Ramsey, 1870, Showing Location of Lockville.



SIX MILLSTONES recently taken from the site of the old Ramsey's Mill in order that they might be preserved for historical value are pictured at left. At right a segment of the gear wheel which was a part of the machinery that transferred power to millstones in the Ramsey mill is displayed by Paul Barringer.

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Figure 10. Millstones and Iron Objects Recovered From Ramsey's Mill Site in late 1950s (source: Mudge 1957).

Descriptions of Lockville and Ramsey's Mill were included in a local history book entitled *Chatham County: 1771-1971*, compiled and written in 1976 by Wade Hadley, Doris Horton and Nell Strowd. Included in this book are photographs of Ramsey's Mill and Ramsey's Tavern, as well as extensive historical information about the mill and Lockville. Another publication by Wade Hadley, "The Story of the Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company, 1849-1873," published in 1980, includes considerable information about Lockville and its role in the navigation improvements of the Cape Fear and Deep Rivers (Hadley 1980).

Additional attention was focused on the history of Lockville and Ramsey's Mill in the early 1980s when researchers with the North Carolina Division of Archives and History began to document industrial sites in North Carolina. In 1981, a student intern with the Research Branch of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History prepared a research paper entitled "The Lockville Canal Works and Hydroelectric Plant: Significance Statement" (Barnett 1981). In 1983 and 1984, this report was expanded into a National Register of Historic Places nomination form (Thomas, et al. 1984). The historical significance of the site was formally recognized in 1984 when the "Lockville Dam, Canal and Powerhouse" property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The designated site included the remains of the lock and dam, Ramsey's Mill, and the early twentieth century power plant located on the old canal and lock. The property was considered to be historically significant under National Register Criteria a, c, and d (Thomas et al. 1984).

An architectural survey of Chatham County was conducted in the late 1980s. This resulted in the publication of "The Architectural Heritage of Chatham County, North Carolina," authored by Rachel Osborn and Ruth Selden-Sturgill (1991). This architectural study includes brief descriptions of Ramsey's Mill, Ramsey's Tavern, Lockville, and nearby properties such as the Parham House. This study added information about the age and style of historic properties in and around Lockville.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the North Carolina Department of Transportation conducted an archaeological survey of the Lockville/Ramsey's Mill area as part of their environmental planning study in 1991 (Robinson 1991). At that time, the Lockville Lock and Dam site was already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and U.S. Highway 1 bisected the historic property. The archaeological report described the historic property and its significance. The survey also resulted in the documentation of other historic properties within or close to the bridge replacement project area. These included architectural structures and archaeological remains of houses, industrial sites, stores and old bridge piers. These historic structures, remains and features were collectively referred to in the report as the "Old Lockville Complex" or the "Lockville Historic Complex" and these were collectively designated as State Archaeological Site Number 31CH690 (Robinson 1991). It was suggested that the Lockville Dam, Canal and Powerhouse historic property and the surrounding historic and archaeological resources could comprise a National Register historic district.